



Every Pastor Who Collects Tithes Is A Thief

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## Religion And Our Society Today

By Charles Ayuune Akurugu

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**"For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice" – James 3:16.**

As I continue my struggle to see some changes in the public sector, especially in the Local Government Service where I work, I become more and more humbled by what gets revealed to me each passing day. I have thought and pondered in my quiet moments on the society we live in today and I understand the hopeless of many in our society today. Since I started this struggle, I have interacted with many people and all they

express is hopelessness and how our systems are failing. I have always said no, there is hope and I still believe there is hope. All we have to do is to rediscover our purpose in this journey called life and we will find that there is nothing like hopelessness when God is concern. And all God is asking of us is righteousness. And for me righteousness means truthfulness, honesty, good works and above all believing in the golden rule of life: Treat others as you would like to be treated.

In my article on salvation (read at <https://www.modernghana.com/news/650053/50/is-salvation-by-grace-faith-or-good.html>), I sought to say that most of our religious leaders are not helping us at all. I said "the Preacher man in Africa has twisted and misinterpreted the Bible to suit his/her black greed." The graphical representation of our society today is illustrated below:



In simple terms what this diagram is saying is that as years go by more people become religious and yet disorder and evil practices keep increasing. In fact, the disorder and evil practice does not only increase; they are increasing at an increasing rate. This is unacceptable but not farfetched. (Note: Religiosity for

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the purpose of this article is defined as the number of people who profess one faith or the other in a given period of time and not exactly as its sociological meaning).

I say it is not farfetched because all you need to do is to listen to the airwaves and hear what is mostly preached to our people. Today most of our preaching is about prosperity and prosperity is equated to travelling abroad or the number of material things you have – cars, houses, etc. Religion has been reduced to performing miracles – healing the sick, letting the blind see and the cripple walk. To ensure that their “collection bowls” get filled up to satisfy their opulence, they will tell you good works or righteousness alone mean nothing. Just go get the money no matter how and come pay your tithes or give to the church, they will pray for you to be saved. And when you question their ways, they will tell you, they are just the carriers of the message so don’t look at their ways as they are also human. Just do what they say God said you should do. And I ask myself, how can a dirty pipeline deliver quality water? Whiles they and their families (sometimes just immediate families) live lavishly, majority of their congregations live in abject poverty. I must be honest here to say that the faith I profess (i.e. Christianity) is the most culpable when it comes to these things. Some of the preaching you hear these days virtually tell you pray more and work less or do nothing and God will come from heaven and take all your problems away. Even what you have to do for God to accept your prayer is mostly missing. It is all about how to let their congregations grow and why not; that is what we as a people glorify.

Today our society has become so materialistic and religious people have not only joined the fray but urgently propagating it with the messages we hear from them. Today in Ghana truth is an exception. When you try to do what is right and proper, you are rather the enemy. Greed and selfish ambition has eaten deep into every aspect of our lives virtually destroying our social fibre. As said by someone the other day, there is so much incentive to do wrong in Ghana today than to do right (Not only in the public sector and that is where I differ with him small). I want to tell you that our society as we see it today has basis in the scriptures as you can see in James 3:16 quoted above.

But there is hope as I have always said. Recently, I read a post attributed to the Pope Francis which says “...It is not necessary to go to church and give money –for many, nature can be a church...”. This has been my long held belief. Again, I was so delighted to hear the new Chairman of the National Media Commission (NMC) say the commission will do something about religious broadcast at his takeover ceremony. It is long overdue and the better we did something now.

Don’t get me wrong! Prayer is a good thing and I do pray. But before I pray I ask myself will my prayer be accepted because even the murderer prays either before killing his victim or after so that s/he will not be caught. What I don’t believe in is that I have to shout out loud all day or night for God to hear me. I would be defeating my definition of God – Omnipotent; Omnipresent; Omniscient (Quran 31:35); All-Hearing & All-Seeing (Quran 31:29); All-Aware (Quran 31:17 & 53); Self-Sufficient (Quran 31:13).

I believe in praising and glorifying his name and that we can gather in his name to do this for it is only proper to give HIM thanks and praise. But I believe more in living a life that glorifies and gives praise to HIS name every single moment of your life. I believe in the collection of money in the name of the church but also believe that money should be used for the betterment of the less endowed members of that church or society and not to support the opulent lifestyle of an individual. Why not? You can drive whatever car, live in whatever house, eat whatever food etc but not when some members of your church are barely surviving.



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